

## **NATIVE AMERICAN INITIATIVE**



The President's budget proposes several initiatives designed to assist Native Americans and Indian reservations. The initiatives bring together several agencies to comprehensively address the needs of Native American communities and include efforts to expand school construction and repair; build and restore roads; improve access to health care; and stimulate economic activity and job creation.

### **Native American Small Business Development Centers**

The Small Business Administration proposes \$3 million to create a network of Native American Small Business Development Centers (NA SBDCs). The vast distances and often small, widely dispersed reservation populations in Indian Country create barriers that have hurt the effectiveness of mainstream programs. NA SBDCs would draw on the success of the SBDC program to provide business development training and counseling on a wide range of subjects – accounting, marketing, business planning and product development, to name a few. However, NA SBDCs would recognize the cultural differences and the specific needs of reservation and non-reservation based economies.

- SBA would fund one Native American business or economic development organization which would create a lead center and distribute funds to a network of approximately 18 sub-centers or service centers.
- All service centers would be on reservations or in reservation-based communities and staffed by Native Americans.

### **Tribal Business Information Centers (TBICs)**

SBA requests \$1.5 million to fund 17 existing TBICs. Funding at this level will support enhanced technology and additional approaches to providing innovative training, counseling and other forms of business development assistance.

### **BusinessLINC in Indian Country**

SBA is requesting \$1.25 million to expand the BusinessLINC (Learning, Investment, Networking and Collaboration) program to Indian Country. The request is part of SBA's \$6.6 million request for BusinessLINC. The proposal will establish mentor-protégé relationships between large and small businesses. The goal of BusinessLINC is to encourage large firms to provide technical assistance, business advice, networking, investment, and joint venturing opportunities for locally-owned smaller firms.

SBA envisions its NA SBDCs working collaboratively with private entities, other agencies, such as the National Science Foundation, the CDFI Fund, HUD, and state and local authorities to help address the digital divide and encourage economic development for Native Americans.